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CAMPUS ENGAGED FOR SAUCER STUDY

U. of Colorado Project Will
Seek to Allay Public Fears

By WALTER SULLIVAN

The Air Force has engaged the University of Colorado to undertake a 15-month study of unidentified flying objects, or U.F.O.'s.

The scientific director of the project will be Dr. Edward U. Condon, professor of physics at the university. Dr. Condon is the former head of the National Bureau of Standards.

The project's headquarters will be on the university campus in Boulder, Colo. However, the Air Force will help with personnel and will transport investigation teams to communities where sightings of such objects have been reported.

The project is an outgrowth of public dismay and distrust over the Air Force's handling of reports about unidentified flying objects. The situation has been aggravated by numerous accounts of sightings in recent years and by a spate of "flying saucer" books, contending that U.F.O.'s may represent visitations from other worlds.

The Air Force attitude toward the problem at one time was indicated by the fact that its office for checking on such reports was staffed by one officer, one sergeant and a secretary. The periodic reports by this office are bound in blue and hence the investigation has become known as Project Blue Book.

Some months ago the Air Force decided that, to meet public pressure for an independent inquiry, a university with an impeccable reputation should be named to conduct a study. A contract to this end was signed

yesterday by the University of Colorado.

Ties With U. S. Project

Under the new arrangement Project Blue Book will continue to operate at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. However, the base will notify the University of Colorado when there are events that seem to merit special investigation. The original proposal for a university program indicated that about 10 such events each year would be investigated in depth.

The plan is for the university to provide specialists in such fields as astronomy, meteorology and psychiatry to help evaluate what witnesses report they have seen. The university is to be solely responsible for the conclusions drawn.

At the same time the Air Force is to make available to the university all that it knows about current and past reports. Part of this material, however, will not be passed on to the public in later reports because it deals with such classified matters as military aircraft and space surveillance systems.

It is also expected that such information as psychiatric evaluations of some witnesses will not be made public to avoid re-priminations. In the past flying saucer "believers" have argued

that many sightings are not reported because witnesses fear ridicule.

In the past such sightings have been attributed by the Air Force to swamp gas, planets, aircraft, earth satellites, weather balloons and a variety of other phenomena.

Accounts by independent investigators have confirmed that witnesses were reluctant to speak openly of what they saw.

It is therefore planned to offer witnesses anonymity if they so desire.

An official announcement on the project was scheduled to be made today by the Pentagon. However, the details became known in advance in Colorado and were published in The Denver Post yesterday.

Dr. Condon, a theoretical physicist who played an important role in development of the first atomic bomb, was embroiled in a controversy with the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1948.

He was then granted and denied various security clearances in a series of episodes that evoked indignant comment from segments of the press and the scientific community.

In 1953 Dr. Condon served as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Soon thereafter he returned to academic life.

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